

24. ABNORMAL CLUTCH IN INDIAN BROWNBACKED ROBIN *SAXICOLOIDES FULICATA CAMBAIENSIS* (LATHAM)

On 30 April 1990, a nest of the Indian brownbacked robin *Saxicoloides fulicata cambaiensis* was observed at Aligarh (27°29' N to 77°29'E) in a residential hostel. The nest, located on an electric meter board, was in active incubation stage with an unusually large clutch of seven eggs. The eggs were incubated till 5 May 1990 before the nest was finally abandoned. Ali and Ripley (HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, 1983) have reported the normal clutch to be three, sometimes two. This unusual clutch is either due to erratic laying or due to use of the same nest site for subsequent broods. Robins are reported to use the same nest site for subsequent broods during

their breeding period, but it is not known whether the same nest is used for the next laying if the previous clutch is unsuccessful and eggs are not removed.

The robin possibly laid eggs of this next brood after unsuccessful incubation of the previous one, thus leading to the mixing of the eggs of two clutches. It is possible that the eggs of the previous clutch would have been again incubated, as a result of which the freshly laid eggs could not be maintained at optimum temperature for hatching; consequently, none of them hatched.

December 10, 1990

SALIM JAVED

25. PIED GROUND THRUSH *ZOOTHERA WARDII* (BLYTH) IN BANGALORE

On 14 October 1990, while observing birds at the Gandhi Krishi Vignana Kendra, Bangalore, on National Highway No. 7, I noticed some movement under a tree with drooping branches touching the ground, offering a lot of shade underneath. On taking a closer look through 7x35 binoculars a thrush-like bird was seen hopping on the ground. Seeing me the bird became alert, flew and settled on an open canopied tree nearby. The bird remained in the canopy for nearly 20 minutes affording a

very good view, and was identified as the pied ground thrush *Zoothera wardii* (Blyth).

Interestingly, the bird was seen in a lightly wooded area, a Botanical Garden (920 m), though it is indicated that the species occurs in the hills, frequenting dense forests and ravines. It is a bird of passage in the peninsula to its wintering grounds in Sri Lanka.

December 7, 1990

S. KARTHIKEYAN

26. RECORD OF THE RIVERINE TURTLE *TRIONYX LEITHI* FROM THANJAVUR DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

A short field survey made in various localities of Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu, in the months of August, December 1990, and March 1991 yielded the following three species of freshwater turtles: Madras pond turtle *Melanochelys trijuga*, Indian flapshell turtle *Lissemys punctata* and riverine or softshell turtle *Trionyx leithi*. While the first two species are known from the district, the record of *Trionyx leithi* is interesting.

A single specimen of *T. leithi* trapped from the Coleroon river, was purchased from a local fisherman near Kollidam village (Sirkali). This specimen, preserved at the museum of Madras Snake Park Trust, has the following morphometric details. CL = 12.5 cm, CW = 11 cm, PL = 10.5 cm, weight = 205 g.

There has been some confusion on the dis-

tribution of *T. leithi*. Smith's (1931) assessment of its range as Ganges and rivers of peninsular India has been proved to be wrong; caused by misidentification by Annandale (1915). In a recent reassessment of its distribution, Moll and Vijaya (1986) have recorded this species from Godavari river (Kotipalle, Andhra Pradesh), Balimela reservoir (Chitrakonda, Orissa) and Moyar and Bhavani rivers (Nilgiri and Periyar districts respectively) of the Cauvery drainage; the last one constituting the first record from Tamil Nadu and Cauvery.

Although *M. trijuga* and *L. punctata* are common and have a wide distribution in Tamil Nadu, *T. leithi* is much rarer, known only from Nilgiris and Periyar districts. The present record from Coleroon, Thanjavur district, is thus of significance. Coleroon is a tributary of Cauvery join-